REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 9-11, 22, 23, 25, 29, and 73-80 are currently under consideration in the case.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for helpful discussions which took place on August 13, 2003 and August 15, 2003. Amendments contained herein are in the spirit of the discussions with the Examiner. Three attempts were made to file this communication by facsimile, however, Applicants were informed that the transmissions were never received, thus necessitating this filing by Express Mail.

Please enter new claims 81-84, as discussed with the Examiner.

Claim Amendments

Applicants have amended claims 73 and 74, as helpfully suggested by the Examiner, to add the feature that the cells are "isolated, hypermutable antibody-producing" cells. No new matter is added.

Applicants have amended claims 77 and 80, as helpfully suggested by the Examiner, to add the feature that the cells are "isolated, genetically stable antibody-producing" cells. No new matter is added.

Applicants have amended claim 76 to add the feature that the antibody-producing cells produce antibodies with increased affinity for antigen than the antibodies produced prior to the introduction of the dominant negative allele. Support for the amendment may be found throughout the Specification, including for example, page 4 lines 10-13. Applicants have further amended claim 76 to include the feature that the dominant negative allele of the PMS2 mismatch repair gene (which was introduced as a portion of

a polynucleotide in the independent claim) is inactivated. Support for the amendment may be found in various parts of the Specification, including, for example, page 13, lines 27-30 through page 14, lines 1-5 wherein it is discussed that the dominant negative allele may be inactivated by directly knocking out the dominant negative allele, by using a CRE-LOX expression system or by using inducible promoters. No new matter is added.

Applicants have added claim 81 to mirror claim 76 except that the claim includes the feature of the cells producing an increased titer of antibody compared to the cells prior to the introduction of the dominant negative allele of the PMS2 mismatch repair gene, rather than antibodies with increased affinity. Support for this claim may be found, for example at page 4, lines 10-13.

Applicants have amended claim 79 to mirror claim 76, except that it depends from claim 78 rather than claim 75. No new matter is added.

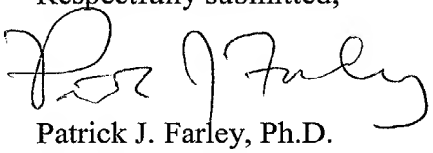
Applicants have added claim 83 to mirror added claim 81, except that it depends from claim 78 rather than claim 75. No new matter is added.

Applicants have added new claims 82 and 84 to mirror claims 77 and 80, respectively, except that they depend from the claims drawn to cells that produce higher titers of antibodies. No new matter is added.

CONCLUSION

Applicants earnestly submit that the claims are in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner wish to further discuss the amendments, he is invited to call the undersigned at the telephone number provided.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: August 26, 2003

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